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Message Text

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12
ACTION NEA-16

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EB-11 CAB-09 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00

DOTE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 FAA-00 PM-07 H-03 L-03

NSC-07 PA-04 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20 USIA-15 MC-02 IGA-02

ACDA-19 DRC-01 XMB-07 TRSE-00 /142 W
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P 011542Z JUL 74 ZDK
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8745
INFO AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 7541

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: ETRN SY
SUBJ: SYRIAN ARAB AIRLINES ACQUISITION DECISION

REF: STATE 141561; DAMASCUS 1295

SUMMARY: RCAA MET WITH LOCKHEED-CALIFORNIA PRESIDENT
AND MEA GEN MANAGER TODAY REVEALING ELEMENTS WIDEBODIES
DELIBERATIONS SUPPLEMENTARY TO THOSE REPORTED IN DAMASCUS 1295.
END SUMMARY.

1. FOLLOWING IS INFO SUPPLEMENTARY TO DAMASCUS
1295 BASED ON CONVERSATIONS RCAA HELD WITH LOCKHEED-
CALIFORNIA PRES DUANE WOOD AND MEA GEN MANAGER ASAD NASR:

A. ACCORDING WOOD SIX-MAN SARG/SYRIAN ARAB AIRLINES
SELECTION COMMITTEE EVALUATING WIDEBODIED AIRCRAFT NOW
SPLIT THREE AGAINST THREE, A-300B VS L-1011 TRISTAR.
THREE MEMBERS SUPPORTING A-300B4 ARE SYRIAN ARAB AIRLINES
MEMBERS AND CONSIST OF FOL: CHAIRMAN MOUKAYED,
DIR OF OPERATIONS/CHIEF PILOT TINAWI, PRES ANTAR.
HEAD OF OF COMMITTEE, AIR FORCE COMMANDER GEN NAJI JAMIL,
AND OTHER TWO GOVT MEMBERS SUPPORT TRISTARS.
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B. MOUKAYED AND TINAWI WERE REPORTEDLY STRONG PROPONENTS US WIDEBIDIED TRIJETS UP UNTIL LAST WEEK AND HAVE SHIFTED TO A-300B4 FOR "NON-TECHNICAL" REASONS, COVERING SUPPORT BY VAGUE ASSERTIONS THAT DESPITE RANGE DEFICIENCIES, A-300B4 BEST SUITS SYRIAN ARAB'S CURRENT STANCE. RCAA NOTES, IN THIS REGARD, A-300B4 ACQUISITION WOULD NOT ONLY GIVE SYRIAN ARAB RANGE-DEFICIENT AIRCRAFT BUT RELEGATE AIRLINE TO CONTINUED EQUIP DEFICIENCIES VIS A VIS ITS ARAB NEIGHBORS (I.E., TRISTARS, SAUDI; 747-200'S, MEA; TRISTARS, GULF AIR; ETC.).

C. WOOD ECPHASIZES USG FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR ASSISTANCE (I.E., EXIMBANK) NOT REQUIRED BY US AIRCRAFT MANUFACTURES SINCE SHEIK ZAID, RULER OF ABU DHABI, CONTINUES TO OFFER FULL FINANCIAL COVERAGE FOR THREE WIDEBODIED AIRCRAFT.

D. RCAA SUGGESTS ANY US DEMARCHE BE ORIENTED TOWARD SUPPORTING ALL THREE US CONPETITORS FOR SYRIAN ARAB WIDEBODIED ORDER BY POINTING UP PROVEN ECONOMIC, OPERATIONAL, AND PRODUCT-SUPPORT SUPERIORITY OF ALL US AIRCRAFT AS AGAINST THE RANGE-DEFIDIENT (I.E., DAMASCUS-LONDON, NEW DELHI-DAMASCUS) AND UNPROVEN A-300B4.

E. IN MEETING LATE THIS MORNING MEA GEN MANAGER, ASAD MASR, FLATLY STATED SYRIAN ARAB HAD DECIDED TO BUY A-300B4'S. THIS INFO PROBABLY CONVENYED TO MEA BY THE AIRLINE MEMBERS OF SELECTION COMMITTEE.

F. DUANE WOOD BELIEVES PRES HAFEZ ASSAD (WHO WILL MAKE FINAL EQUIP DECISION) FAVORS US WIDEBODIED AIRCRAFT FOR AIRLINE BUT NEEDS COMPELLING EXCUSE TO REJECT A-300B4 TO AVOID UNDULY ALIENATING GOF.
GODLEY

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